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ABSTRACT

For generations, moral development has been both a conscious aim and a formal process in Japanese education. This book investigates the history and development of Japanese moral education and analyzes and compares current moral education with the concepts of the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) and the "shushin" moral education of prewar Japan. The book explains that the Rescript contains Confucian and Shinto precepts and was to become the codification of the moral standards of the Japanese way of life in pre-surrender Japan. The question asked is whether contemporary Japanese moral education is still influenced by the moral principles that pertained before World War II, in spite of the commonly held view that Japan has departed from "shushin" style of moral education. The book examines the ethical conditions precipitated by the "Opening" and the impact of the Rescript in theory and practice, as well as traditional moral values and the educational response to Westernization. It also describes postwar proposals for moral education, examines the role and function of current and prewar Japanese moral education, and shows the connection with Rescript values operating on and below the surface of contemporary practice. Translations of actual "dotoku" (morality) textbooks currently in use are compared in the book with the tenets of prewar moral education found in the Rescript and "shushin" texts. The book's conclusion is that Confucian ethics is still the engine of Japanese social cohesion and dynamics. Contains a chronology, a glossary, and an extensive bibliography. (BT)

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